



Brief summary of LDA foundation Armenia activities (April-June period, 2014)

20 July, 2014

1. Grant Proposals

- “Local Democracy Agency” foundation Armenia submitted a project proposal for the call of Heinrich Boell foundation entitled “School of local democracy in Gyumri” for the students of Gyumri city in cooperation with LDA Georgia and Urban Foundation. The project aimed to foster the role of civil society in promoting fundamental freedom in Gyumri by developing a civil society network and virtual space for discussion of democracy issues for youngsters. The reply is expected in August, 2014.
- Urban foundation in partnership with ALDA - The European Association for Local Democracy and LDA foundation applied for the call Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development –Action in partner countries on behalf of European Commission entitled “Better Together: Action for Mutual Trust and Improved Services”. The project aimed to contribute to creation of atmosphere of mutual trust and collaboration among local non-state actors and local authorities while implementing administrative consolidation in pilot community clusters. But at the beginning of July 2014 the concept note was rejected.
- “Local Democracy Agency” foundation together with Urban foundation, Counterpart Armenia, American University of Armenia Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis, Hetq Investigative Journalists NGO, ALDA was involved in the project proposal entitled “Civic Activism for Progress and Engagement: CAPE-able” announced by USAID. The overall objective of the program was to increase civic engagement and oversight of selected reforms in decentralization and local governance. But unfortunately, the proposal was rejected.

2. Code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process

During the workshop “Citizens Participation in decision-making process at the local level” in Gyumri in December 2013 the participants suggested to translate “Code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process” into Armenian as more organizations can have access to it. The manual is in the drafting process and will be ready in August.



Brief summary of LDA foundation Armenia activities (April-June period, 2014)

3. Meetings

- On 17th of April Lusine Aleksandryan participated in the Ninth Community Development and Collaboration Forum (CDCF) focusing on “Participatory Governance at the Local Level: Achievements and Challenges” organized by Counterpart Armenia in Yerevan. This meeting was aimed at better planning donor activities focused on deepening democracy in Armenian communities through participatory local governance. At the ninth CDCF donors and civil society organizations that are engaged in promoting participatory governance at the local level like Oxfam Armenia, Information System Development and Training Center NGO, UNDP Armenia, Counterpart’s partner communities and Counterpart International itself presented the projects they are currently implementing. Representatives of partner communities, including mayors, youth organizations and NGOs had the chance to discuss citizen participation in democratic governance processes. Topics varied from traditional to non-traditional methods for mobilizing citizens and creating an active civil society for the sake of community development; for example, “Micro Referendum Tool: Citizen Engagement through SMS-Polling”, “E-Participation in Armenian Communities”, “Public Involvement in LG Decision-Making through Social Media”. Participants got first hand information on lessons learned from communities like Qarahunj, Ashtarak, Meghri, etc.





Brief summary of LDA foundation Armenia activities (April-June period, 2014)

- On 17th of April Lusine also met Typhaine Rampillon, coopération attachée at the French Embassy in charge of following European and multilateral actors' activities in Yerevan. She is eager to begin the cooperation with LDA foundation at last and is interested in kindergartens' conditions in Gyumri. Lusine prepared and sent information about kindergartens' food and conditions to them for further consideration.
- Lusine Aleksandryan and former assistant Esmarida Poghosyan participated in the clustered regional forum organized by Counterpart International Armenia in Akhuryan and Gyumri municipalities on 20th of May. The aim of the forum and the retreat was to discuss with partner communities “What they expected at the beginning of the program, what results they have at the end of the program and what do they expect from future programs” and to share their ideas on common borders, issues, vision, objectives and solutions with the participants. The participants made presentations on the implemented projects, spoke about the challenges, lessons learnt, achievements and success, etc. Additionally, internal study tours for the communities of central regions were conducted with the aim of enabling partner communities get to know each other, share their experiences and ideas, as well as get introduced with the projects implemented in other communities. The forum was attended also by the staff employer and deputy Department head of external relations, tourism and event planning of Gyumri municipality: Robert Asatryan and Mkrtich Chartaryan respectively, LDA foundation local partners Levon Barseghyan and Vahan Tumasyan.





Brief summary of LDA foundation Armenia activities (April-June period, 2014)

4. International participation

ALDA General Assembly

“Local Democracy Agency” foundation director Lusine Aleksandryan participated in ALDA annual General Assembly on 6th of June, 2014 in Strasbourg. During the assembly moral and activity reports were presented, Treasurer’s report and the strategic views were approved by the participants.

An extraordinary assembly also took place, which approved some changes to the statute of the association. The main changes involve the introduction of the role of the Secretary General, which substitutes the Director of ALDA; the Secretary of the association, at the same time, becomes the third Vice-President. The Scientific Committee is changed to Advisory Board to highlight its advisory role, while its competences are the same.

The event represented the ideal moment to present the book, written by Antonella Valmorbida and gathering the contributions of the staff of ALDA, delegates of Local Democracy Agencies, and members and partners of the association, on citizen participation in the enlarged Europe. Published by Peter Lang, it collects 15 years experiences on the field.

The Vice President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Svetozar Pudaric, and the Permanent Representative Mr Sahovic also attended the event, and explained the dramatic situation affecting the country because of the disastrous floods. ALDA and the Local Democracy Agencies located in the area are actively fundraising to support the affected population.

The General Assembly was of great opportunity for LDA foundation delegate as she met other LDA delegates, exchanged ideas and experience, discussed weak and strong points of the LDA’s missions, projects, got better understanding of ALDA strategy and vision on the spot.





Brief summary of LDA foundation Armenia activities (April-June period, 2014)

Hearing on local and regional democracy in Armenia

On 26 March 2014 the Congress of the Council of Europe adopted its monitoring report on the state of local democracy in Armenia. The report underlines the efforts made to implement the provisions of the Charter, in particular constitutional changes in 2005 and the passage of a new law in 2008. It is recommended that the Armenian authorities review the legislation for implementing the principle of subsidiarity. The Armenian authorities are urged to foster inter-municipal co-operation and increase the capacity of community councils. It is also recommended that they define and ensure the exercise of full and exclusive powers for local authorities.

A hearing was organized to discuss the perspectives of implementing local democracy in Armenia and the role that the Council of Europe and the EU can play to support the development of regions in Armenia on 5th of June, 2014 in Brussels, Belgium. LDA foundation director Lusine Aleksandryan was invited as a speaker to participate in the 3rd session **Local Democracy in Armenia – the perspective of the Civil Society** and made her remarks on the state of civil society participation in local democracy issues. The hearing was opened with speeches by Mr Olgierd GEBLEWICZ (PL/EPP), Marshal of the Western Pomeranian Region, CoR rapporteur on European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), H.E. Traian HRISTEA Head of EU Delegation to Armenia (video address), Mr Andrea Matteo FONTANA, Head of Unit - Geographical Coordination Neighbourhood East, DG DEVCO, European Commission. Presentations were made also by Mr Knud ANDERSEN, Representative of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress and Mr David TUMANYAN, Member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government that made presentations on Council of Europe's Assessment and recommendations, Ms Lusine AVETYAN, Mayor of Karahunj Municipality, Syunik Region, member of the Armenian Delegation to the Congress of the Council of Europe and Mr Emin YERITSYAN, President of the Union of Communities of Armenia, CORLEAP Bureau member reporting on assessment and suggestions for future reforms and Mr Eduardo LORENZO OCHOA, Director of the European Friends of Armenia (EuFoA). There was interaction with the audience after each session.



Brief summary of LDA foundation Armenia activities (April-June period, 2014)



More details about the hearing can be found according to the following website <http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/hearing-local-regional-democracy-armenia.aspx>.